

Memorial Presbyterian Church  
Northwest corner Valencia and Sevilla Streets  
St. Augustine  
St. Johns County  
Florida

HABS No. FLA-170

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Design and Construction  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

## MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Address: Northwest corner Valencia and Sevilla Streets,  
St. Augustine, St. Johns County, Florida.

Present Owner: Memorial Presbyterian Church.

Present Use: Sanctuary and Flagler family tomb.

Statement of Significance: The Memorial Presbyterian Church was donated in 1890 to the St. Augustine First Presbyterian Church by Henry M. Flagler as a memorial to his recently deceased daughter. Flagler, a millionaire philanthropist who originally made a fortune as a business colleague of John D. Rockefeller in Standard Oil, was almost single-handedly responsible for the late 19th-century development of the West Florida Coast as a fashionable resort area. The son of a Presbyterian minister, he was particularly concerned with that church in the first of his Florida resort ventures--St. Augustine. He therefore donated this structure, the land, and the former parsonage (also built at the same time as the church) to the First Presbyterian Church Congregation, in return for their former properties at the corner of St. George and Hypolita Streets, upon which Flagler had the Municipal Building built (1890) for the city.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: Memorial Presbyterian Church--1890 to present.
2. Date of erection: 1889-1890.
3. Architects: Carrère and Hastings, 3 Bowling Green, New York. (John Carrère, 1858-1911; Thomas Hastings, 1860-1929).
4. Builders: McQuire and McDonald (by this date "Flagler's 'official' builders").
5. Notes on original plan and construction of building: Essentially few alterations or additions have been made to the church since it was constructed from the designs of Carrère and Hastings. Over 24 heliograph prints of

the original architects' drawings and several rough architects' sketches for the church and parsonage are still (March, 1965) in the possession of the church. Photocopies of several of these have been reproduced for the Historic American Buildings Survey and are a gift of the Memorial Presbyterian Church; these are included in this "Photo-Data" book and the "Photo-Data" book for the Memorial Presbyterian Church Parsonage, HABS No. FLA-172. The following list with brief descriptions indicates the most important of the architects' drawings for the church:

- (1) "Side Elevation (West)."  
Heliograph with partial colored wash on linen-backed paper. (3' x 4')  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"  
"Carrère and Hastings, Arch'ts.  
3 Bowling Green, N. Y."
- (2) "Transverse Section Looking South."  
Heliograph with partial colored wash on linen-backed paper (1'-10 1/2" x 2'-11")  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"  
"Carrère and Hastings, Arch'ts.  
3 Bowling Green, N. Y."
- (3) "Plan of Dome over Pendentives."  
Heliograph with partial colored wash on linen-backed paper (1'-9" x 1'-7 1/2")  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"  
Stamped with office seal of Carrère and Hastings
- (4) "North Elevation."  
Heliograph with partial colored wash on linen-backed paper (2'-11" x 2'-9")  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"  
"Carrère and Hastings, Arch'ts.  
3 Bowling Green, N. Y."
- (5) "Ground Plan."  
Heliograph with partial colored wash on linen-backed paper (4'-1" x 2'-10")  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"  
"Carrère & Hastings, Arch't."
- (6) "Front Elevation."  
Heliograph with partial colored wash on linen-backed paper (2'-10 1/2" x 3'-3 1/2")  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"  
"Carrère & Hastings, Arch'ts"
- (7) "Transverse Section."  
Ink line on quality tracing paper (1'-6" x 2'-5")  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"

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"Presbyterian Church - St. Augustine, Fla.  
Carrère & Hastings, Architects.  
Traced by: F. A. Hollingsworth - Architect  
St. Augustine--Fla."

- (8) "Longitudinal Section."  
Ink line on quality tracing paper (2'-11" x 4'-3")  
Scale:  $1/4" = 1'-0"$
- (9) "Elevation and plan of Copper Dome."  
Heliograph on Linen-backed paper (2'-1/4" x 2'-6")  
"Carrère & Hastings, Arch'ts"
- (10) "One Half Diagonal of Dome showing pendentives and  
Staircase to Gallery and Dome."  
Heliograph with partial colored wash on linen-backed  
paper (2'-3 1/4" x 1'-8 1/2")  
Scale:  $1/4" = 1'-0"$   
Stamped with office seal of Carrère & Hastings
- (11) "Transverse Section."  
Heliograph with partial colored wash on linen-  
backed paper (1'-11" x 2'-6")  
Scale:  $1/4" = 1'-0"$   
"Carrère & Hastings, Arch'ts"
- (12) "Longitudinal Section."  
Heliograph with partial colored wash on Linen-backed  
paper (2'-11" x 4'-5")  
Scale:  $1/4" = 1'-0"$   
"Carrère and Hastings, Arch'ts"
- (13) "Ground Plan."  
Heliograph on paper (poor condition)  
(3'-11" x 2'-11")  
Scale:  $1/4" = 1'-0"$   
"Carrère & Hastings, Arch'ts"
- (14) Detail of Concrete Bracket.  
Pencil on paper (2'-7" x 3'-4")  
Full scale  
No signature; appears not to be work of architects'  
office, but rather local working drawing.
- (15) Details of Door and Gates.  
Pencil with partial colored wash on paper (4'-0"  
x 2'-9")  
Scale:  $3/4" = 1'-0"$   
Carrère & Hastings, Arch'ts"
- (16) "Ground Plan of Foundations."  
Ink and blue wash on linen. (approximately 3'-7"  
x 2'-7 1/2")  
Scale:  $1/4" = 1'-0"$

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- (17) "Plan and Section of Copper Dome."  
Ink on linen (3'-6 1/2" x 2'-0")  
Scale: 1/2" = 1'-0"  
No indication of architects or draftsmen.
- (18) "Plan of Mosaic."  
Heliograph on paper (2'-4 3/4" x 3'-0")  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"  
Stamped with office seal of Carrère and Hastings
- (19) "Floor Plan, showing pew arrangement in main portion of church"  
Ink on linen (2'-9" x 1'-8")  
Title block: "Presbyterian Church - St. Augustine, Florida; Carrère & Hastings - Architects, 3 Bolding [sic] Green, N. Y.; traced by: F. A. Hollingsworth-Architect - St. Augustine, Fla."

(The drawings call for the use of mass concrete, terra cotta and brick. These materials were also used in Flagler's other St. Augustine building ventures designed by Carrère and Hastings. For an account of the building techniques developed for the construction of these buildings see the Historic American Buildings Survey photo-data book for the Ponce De Leon Hotel; St. Augustine, Florida, HABS No. FLA-173).

It is interesting to note that the "bell in the east tower and the five coquina pillars surrounding the church are relics from the Old First Church" (as this Presbyterian congregation was known until 1890 when the name was changed to "Memorial Presbyterian Church" in keeping with its character as a gift in remembrance of Henry Morrison Flagler's daughter, Jennie Louise Benedict). The First Church was built between 1826 and 1830 on South St. George Street across from the present Lyceum Building.

"The windows of Memorial Church were carefully planned by the Rev. John N. MacGonigle, then [1890] pastor of the church, and Dr. Andrew Anderson, who was President of the Board of Trustees. They worked in close co-operation with the artist Mr. T. Schladerer, of New York, who was commissioned to furnish the sketches. These three men consulted the architects, Messrs. Carrère and Hastings. . . . The Apostles' Creed was chosen for the subject. . . . A color scheme of the ten high, narrow windows which would keep the interior of the church in a single color tone was decided upon. The two broader windows and the rose window were treated independently.

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"The rose window in the East end with the sunburst in the background is the symbol of God the Father Almighty.

The rose window in the chapel is of the head of Christ taken from the scene of 'The Boy Christ in the Temple,' by Hoffman.

"The windows were made by the Decorative Glass Company, New York. Mr. Schladermundt [the artist, has some] of his work. . . in the Library of Congress in Washington, D. C." (All quotations are from the brochure published by the Memorial Presbyterian Church Society, The Flagler Story and Memorial Church; there is no pagination).

6. Notes on known alterations and additions: Two additions or changes of note are mentioned in The Flagler Story and Memorial Church: "Dr. Andrew H. Anderson, a close personal friend of Mr. Flagler and for many years a trustee of the church . . . in the 1920's . . . engaged acoustical engineers at his own expense to correct the bad acoustical qualities of the building.

"In 1928 the Roosevelt Organ was rebuilt and a solo organ added. . ."

B. Historical Events and Persons Associated with Building:

"When Flagler returned to St. Augustine [after his daughter's death near Charleston, S. C. in March 1889], the city he had fostered was experiencing such growth that the little First Presbyterian Church was seeking to expand its facilities. This gave Mr. Flagler opportunity to offer a new church edifice as a memorial to Jennie Louise. The officers of the church agreed, and as always with Flagler, plans were set in motion at once.

"Memorial Church was dedicated with solemn and auspicious ceremonies on March 16th, 1890. St. Augustine was at the height of another gala season; visitors had watched the church in process of building, and the day of dedication was eagerly awaited. Mr. Flagler had made elaborate plans for the opening service; he brought his old friend and pastor, Dr. John R. Paxton, of West Presbyterian Church of New York City, his famous choir, and organist by special train for the occasion. Several other distinguished ministers from distant cities were present and took part in the several services of the day.

"The church was crowded to the doors with people of all stations and walks of life, among them such distinguished persons as Mrs. Benjamin Harrison, 'First Lady' of the land, Vice- President and Mrs. Levi P. Morton, and members of the

of the Wanamaker Family of Philadelphia." (The Flagler Story and Memorial Church).

C. Sources of Information:

1. Primary: Memorial Presbyterian Church, St. Augustine, Florida. Collection of heliograph prints of architects' drawings and sketches dating in general from the late 1880's.
2. Secondary: Memorial Presbyterian Church Society. The Flagler Story and Memorial Church, 1949. Tenth printing, 1963. St. Augustine, Florida: Memorial Presbyterian Church Society, 1949.

- D. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: Local newspaper accounts contemporary with construction. Session Minutes and Board of Trustees' Minutes of the Memorial Presbyterian Church.

Prepared by John C. Poppeliers, Architectural  
Historian  
National Park Service  
October 1965

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: The architectural style of the Memorial Presbyterian Church is actually an eclectic composition of Romanesque, Byzantine, and Italian Renaissance motifs which seem consciously to combine to evoke a Spanish "manner." The interior presents a more restrained classical Renaissance appearance. The real architectural importance of the Memorial Church--along with that of the other St. Augustine structures designed by Carrère and Hastings for Henry M. Flagler--is that it is among the first large-scale examples of mass concrete construction since Roman times. Of particular interest is the fact that, although these buildings were elaborately decorated, the concrete surfaces were left unfinished and show the outline and graining of their wooden forms.
2. Condition of fabric: The church has always been well-maintained, and a series of minor additions and alterations have not changed the architectural character of the church itself. The parsonage in back of the church, which is of the same construction and forms an integral part of the complex, has had major interior alterations and a large wing added to the west. See HABS documentation

under title of: Memorial Presbyterian Church Parsonage,  
HABS No. FLA-172.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Number of stories: One story with high lantern and dome.
2. Over-all dimensions: 170'-10" (N-S) x approximately 111'-1" (E-W)
3. Layout--shape: Latin Cross (with major axis N-S) with circular Flagler Family Tomb projecting from the west side of the narthex.
4. Foundations: Mass concrete
5. Wall construction, finish: Mass concrete, left unfinished, with decorative details in brick and terra cotta.

The following descriptive account is taken from the Memorial Presbyterian Church Society's brochure, The Flagler Story and Memorial Church:

"... built in the form of a Latin cross, its central Venetian dome rises more than a hundred feet in height and is topped by a Greek cross which rises more than twenty feet above the dome. It is a copper dome, supported by solid masonry, octagonal in shape, and richly ornamented with elaborate capitals in old-gold and white terra cotta set in Roman brick masonry. The twenty-four arches of the dome's arcade are supported by pillars of red terra cotta. Four angle towers serve as buttresses and occupy the four corners of the transept; their capitals likewise are embellished in red and old-gold terra cotta and yellow bricks, after the Venetian manner. The bell towers, at the front of the church, are much lower, but are more highly ornamented with intricate open designs in white terra cotta.

"The broad steps of the front entrance lead through three Venetian arches, supported by red terra cotta Ionic pillars. These center in one huge Roman arch marked off by a corbel of Roman brick beneath a rose window of white terra cotta. An oval mosaic in rich colors beneath the crest of the roof depicts a floral cross and the figure of three doves and completes the facade of the church.

"The interior is furnished with finely carved mahogany woodwork from Santo Domingo. All the pews, panelling, and doors are of this same rich wood, specially imported for this church.

"From the high vaulted ceilings hang double cruciform bronze chandeliers of interlacing floral design. Bronze Venetian torchiers line the aisles.

"The floor is of imported Siena tile laid in Venetian pattern, relieved by twelve plaques of violet breccia marble symbolic of the twelve apostles.

"The great Baptismal Font is one solid piece of Siena marble, an unusually fine specimen of Italian carving. It bears, the inscription 'In Memoriam--F. H. B. to J. L. B.--March 25th, 1889--' 'I will be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee.'" The quotation is from Genesis 17:7. The baptismal font is fitted with a table top at communion seasons and from it the Lord's Supper is served. The font thus symbolizes both of the Christian sacraments.

"Above the font is the carved eagle lectern; upon it is a Bible of extraordinary size and design, its leather binding richly ornamented with hand-wrought silver cherubim and a memorial plaque. . . . The services of worship are conducted from the lectern; the minister preaches from the pulpit at the side, its canopy simulating a huge shell.

"Above and behind the rostrum is the beautifully carved choir screen; from this loft the organ is played and the choir sings. During the service the choir is all but invisible; . . .

"There are three pipe organs: the original great organ, a Roosevelt, occupies the west transept; the solo organ in the north gallery, and the echo organ and chimes in the south gallery are Estey installations. All three are played from the four-manual console in the choir loft. . . .

"The distinctive stained glass windows, representing the several articles of the Apostles' Creed, were a special gift of Mr. Flagler in 1902. They are original designs and employ colorful symbols from church tradition combined with symbols from nature. . . .

"On the west side of the nave, beneath the windows representing the articles: 'I believe in the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting' are the bronze doors and marble archway that lead into the mausoleum of the Flagler family. Here rest the mortal remains of Henry M. Flagler, pioneer developer of Florida, his first wife, Mary Harkness, their daughter, Jennie Louise, and her baby."

Prepared by John C. Poppeliers, Architectural  
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National Park Service  
March 1965